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**Written Testimony**  
**House Bill 426 - Places of Public Accommodation - Motion Picture**  
**Houses - Captioning**  
**Economic Matters Committee – February 6, 2024**  
**Support**

**Background: House Bill 426** would require that all motion picture houses offer closed captioning for each screening of a motion picture; and require a place of public accommodation that controls, operates, owns, or leases at least two motion picture houses in the State to provide open captioning for at least two screenings each week.

**Written Comments:** The Baltimore Jewish Council represents The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore and all of its agencies. This includes the Jewish Connection Network, which has an entire department dedicated to ensuring that every member of our community, regardless of their background or abilities, can fully embrace Jewish life.

The U.S. hard-of-hearing population parallels the U.S. Jewish population. And while there are no resources to correlate deaf statistics to the Jewish population, there is no reason to assume the percentage of deaf Jews is other than that of the general population. It can be estimated that 0.22 percent of U.S. Jews, more than 14,000 people, are deaf; 2.2 percent of U.S. Jews, nearly 142,000 people, have a lot of trouble hearing; and 2.05 percent of Jews worldwide, some 271,256 people, have disabling hearing impairment.

Going to the movies is one of the most enjoyable pastimes. By providing open and/or closed captioning, Maryland would be expanding the accessibility to an even wider audience.

Choosing to support this legislation is a no-brainer that can make a huge difference for the deaf community, those with any type of hearing loss, or any other individuals who benefit from open and/or closed captioning. **For these reasons, the Baltimore Jewish Councils asks for a favorable report on HB426.**

*The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.*